

and taste could not be prosecuted with a more marked application, and with more discriminative references, than the continual repetition of the expressions, "elegant literature," and "these writers." It might be a service of some value to the evangelical cause, if a work were written containing a faithful estimate, individually, of the most popular writers of the last century and a half, in respect to the important subject of these comments; with formal citations from some of their works, and a candid statement of the general tendency of others. In an essay like this it is impossible to make an enumeration of names, or pass a judgment, except in a very cursory manner, on any particular author. Even the several *classes* of authors, which I mentioned some time back, as coming under the accusation, shall detain you but a short time.

The Moral Philosophers for the most part seem anxious to avoid everything that might render them liable to be mistaken for Christian Divines. They regard their department as a science complete in itself; and they investigate the foundation of morality, define its laws, and affix its sanctions, in a manner generally so much apart from Christianity, that the reader would almost conclude that religion to be *another* science complete in itself.* An *entire* separation, it is true, cannot well be preserved; since Christianity has decided some moral questions on which reason was dubious or silent; and since that final retribution, which the New Testament has so luminously foreshown, brings evidently the greatest of sanctions. To make *no* reference in the course of inculcating moral principles, to a judgment to come, if there be an understood admission that it is actually revealed, would look like systematic irreligion. But still it is striking to observe how small a portion of the ideas (relative to this and other points of the greatest moral interest), which distinguish the New Testament from other books, many moral philosophers have thought indispensable to a theory in which they professed to

* When it happens sometimes, that a moral topic hardly *can* be disposed of without some recognition of its involving, or being intimately connected with, a *theological* doctrine, it is curious to notice, with what an air of indifference, somewhat partaking of contempt, one of these writers will observe, that *that* view of the matter is the business of the *divines* ^ with whose department he does not pretend to interfere.